

**Williams Township Planning Commission
Regular Meeting
September 8, 2008**

The Planning Commission of the Charter Township of Williams held a regular meeting on Monday September 8, 2008 at the Township Hall.

The agenda is attached Exhibit A.

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

Chairperson Steward called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Present: B. Steward, D. Behmlander, D. Putt, and P. Wasek.

Excused: C. Adams and J. Hurt.

Commissioner J. Hurt arrived at 7:22 p.m.

Also Present: J. Hammond, Township Attorney, and L. Miller, Township Planner. Others present are indicated on the sign in sheet, attached Exhibit B.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was said in unison.

III. Open to the Public

There was no public comment.

IV. New Business

A. Zoning Ordinance Amendment Discussion

The proposed amendments to Williams Township Ordinance #48 and #33 were discussed At length.

J. Hammond explained the proposed changes to Ordinance No. 48. They all related to compliance with the new Planning Enabling Act. Planning Commissioners said that they approved of the changes.

J. Hammond next reviewed provisions to amend Ordinance # 33 by adding Sections 2.57.5 and 2.57.6 to provide definitions of "Wind Farm" and Wind Turbine". Table 2 of Ordinance No. 33 would be amended by adding "Wind Farms" as a special use in the AG

zoned district and “Wind Turbines” as special uses in the AG and RE zoned districts.

J. Hammond explained that the township needs specific approval standards for wind farms and wind turbines. The township received its first inquiry for a residential wind turbine. He read the definition and stated that it would be allowed by a special use permit. Wind farms are only allowed in AGR districts. Since this is a new section of the ordinance, a determination must be made on what approval standards must be adhered to.

D. Putt asked what if someone in a subdivision would want a wind turbine?

It was explained that a wind turbine is only allowed in AG and RE zoned districts.

B. Steward commented that someone who has a parcel R-1 may want a wind turbine if they have a large enough parcel.

J. Hammond commented that several wind turbines in a close area could be a nuisance.

L. Miller explained that the township should take a small step to incorporate this into the township ordinance. We are not in a high wind area. The higher the wind turbine the greater the wind velocity. There are three different types that we would deal with. First, would be up to 60 feet. It will not satisfy the need for a single house. The payback is 30 to 40 years and it only reduces the power bill by 25%.

J. Hurt arrived at 7:22 p.m.

Second is 60-120 feet. It could almost be self sufficient for a house. The payback may be 10 years or more. But then after that repairs will need to be made.

Third is 300-400 feet which would be used for farms. They have the ability to produce a lot of energy.

L. Miller said the approval standards are not absolute. Each case must be evaluated on an individual basis.

B. Steward commented that a minimum area requirement should be set for a wind turbine. He would like a more mechanical approach.

J. Hammond stated that having a minimum area requirement set will not reduce the number of questions or disputes in applying for a wind turbine. The Ordinance needs to provide the township flexibility.

B. Steward stated that the minimum parcel size should be changed in the required standards. A requirement should be more than a one acre parcel.

L. Miller explained that perhaps the township needs to require more than one acre.

B. Steward explained that for a wind farm there should be a contiguous piece of land on the same side of the road. But it should be all on one piece of land so that we keep a wind farm in one area.

B. Steward suggested we change the minimum acre requirement to two acres instead of one. We also need to change the definition of a wind farm from “non-domestic production of electrical power” to “non-residential production of electrical power”.

B. Steward also stated that we need to have 40 acres per each wind turbine for a wind farm.

J. Hammond will change subpart (1) of approval standard #23 to read, “The minimum parcel size shall be two acres for one wind turbine for residential production of electrical power, 40 acres for a wind farm...” The rest of it will stay the same.

The Planning Commission members all agreed.

J. Hammond will re-draft the standard to show those changes.

J. Hammond reviewed changes to Table 8 of Ordinance No. 33. “Asphalt and cement plants” were added as special uses in IND zoned districts. He explained that approval standards are on page 3 of the draft ordinance. The cost of the changes are based on the new Michigan Planning Enabling Act. These revisions were made so that the township will be in compliance with the new act.

J. Hammond will provide the revised ordinances for members to review prior to the October meeting.

B. Sheridan Special Use Permit Extension

J. Hammond explained the Sheridan Special Use Permit Extension. Originally they obtained approval to remove soil and construct ponds. In 2004 they wanted to excavate an additional 72,000 cubic yards of material and remove about 57,000 cubic yards from the site. Since then, Sheridan has sold it to someone who wants to continue with the original plan. It will be the same as the site plan approval of 2004. There is a requirement that all excavation and soil removal must be completed within 12 months. A one year extension is needed. The purchaser requested the extension before the original one year time period was up.

D. Putt asked to be excused from voting on the Sheridan Special Use Permit extension as he has a financial interest in the project. Planning Commission agreed.

A motion was made by B. Steward and seconded by D. Behmlander to approve the Sheridan Special Use Permit Extension, with a completion date of January 1, 2010. The new owners name shall be included in the approval.

4 Ayes 0 Nays. Motion carried.
Abstain: D. Putt
Excused: C. Adams

V. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

VI. Adjournment

A motion was made by D. Putt and seconded by D. Behmlander to adjourn the meeting at 8:37 p.m.
5 Ayes 0 Nays Excused: C. Adams Motion carried.

Pam Reinhardt,
Williams Township Deputy Clerk